

Museum and Cultural Advisory Board - Meeting Minutes

The Museum and Cultural Advisory Board met in a regular meeting at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, One East Main Street, on January 22, 2014.

Members Present:

Nancy Aposhian
Dilworth Brinton, Jr.
David Dean
Merlin Ellis
Melissa Sue Johnson

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti
Karin Wilhelm
Robert Valverde
Alyssa Yingling

Members Absent:

Steve McCance
Margaret (Peggy) Wilson

Staff Present:

Tom Wilson
Jean Kaminski

Sunnee O'Rork

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes:

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, asked for any corrections/additions/deletions to the minutes of November 20, 2014. Karina Wilhelm noted that on page 3 under the Staff Report from Tom Wilson for the Arizona Museum of Natural History, it stated that "Melissa Sue Johnson commented that she took her children during an off day, and loved the exhibition, but had difficulty getting information on the pieces because of the crowds." It was Karina Wilhelm who took her children and made the statement.

David Dean made a motion to approve the minutes of January 22, 2014, with the name correction, and Dilworth Brinton, Jr. seconded. The Board members present unanimously approved the minutes of November 20, 2014 and they will be posted on the City's website.

Public Comments: No members of the public were present.

Tour of Current Exhibitions in Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum – Patty Haberman

Patty Haberman toured the current exhibitions with the Board and provided information on the artists and their inspirations.

Arrangement for a Silent Orchestra, by Prescott artist Julie Cornick, in the South Gallery, is a painting and video project that explores the gradual dissolution of culture in contemporary society through the symbolic ruin of a personal and cultural icon, the violin. Using the violin as a metaphor, she raises questions regarding the relationship between increasing technology and diminishing cultural heritage.

"Insectrographia: Drawing in Enamel" features the biologically inspired enamels of artist Charity Hall. With an emphasis on entomological imagery, Ms. Hall looks beyond the ick factor generally associated with insects and captures their inherent beauty on hand-fabricated brooches and other small jewelry items.

Ms. Haberman gave the Board a sneak peek at the exhibition in the North Gallery that will open on Friday, January 23, titled *"Chamber Music: A Mostly Silent Installation,"* by Diane Gilbert. Her installation creates a spatial environment full of subtle light, expressive shadows, and sculptural forms that are mostly air. Her materials are thousands of played guitar strings and tiny squares of painted screen. Each piece is composed of strings played by many musicians who never knew each other but are now playing silently together contributing to the larger expression of a luminous space.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, expressed a special thank you to Ms. Haberman for the information, sneak peek, and her time.

Staff Reports

i.d.e.a. Museum – Sunnee O'Rork

- The i.d.e.a. Museum hosted two classes of students from ASU for a demonstration and competition of Rube Goldberg playground designs, in the Atrium Classroom. Sunnee O'Rork, Rob Schultz, Jeffory Morris, Rex Witte, and two other experts were judges of the competition.
- The Museum also hosted a "Santa and Super Heroes" event as the opening reception for "Go Figures: The Photography of Danny Neuman" in the back hall gallery.
- The Museum collaborated with Mesa Solid Waste Department and Mesa Public Schools to launch a classroom competition to collect specific recyclable materials. Kindergarten and 1st grade classrooms participated, yielding hundreds of bags of recycled materials to be used in the Recyclery activity space at the Museum. The winners would be given a tour of the Museum; however, the Museum had a tie with two 1st place winners, so both classrooms will be given the tour and party.

- The Museum and the Museum Board have completed their mid-year budget analysis/projections.
- Hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Event.
- A new intern, Matthew Dickens, robotics engineering major from ASU, began working with the Museum. He will be the lead in planning for the 2018 Rube Goldberg exhibition.
- Completed the hiring process, orientation, and training for new Museum Education Assistant Chelsea Marsh (formerly a Gallery Educator at the Museum) to replace Leeza Forward who retired.
- Staff will begin de-installing "Jeepers Creepers: Bugs in Art." East Valley Children's Theatre will perform at the Museum at 11:00 a.m. as part of the weekend celebration saying goodbye to "Jeepers Creepers."
- Staff will begin preparing for the installation of "Build it!" to open February 12. Board members are invited to the opening reception.
- Last year, Councilmember Glover sponsored an art contest, and from the student's entries, the Museum was able to create note cards – Ms. O'Rork passed around samples of the cards. The note cards from the winners are for sale in the Museum shop for \$14.99 a pack and proceeds to go the Museum's education program.
- Ms. O'Rork also passed around a rack card announcing the Southwest Maker Fest in Downtown Mesa on Saturday, March 28, from noon – 8:00 p.m. The Museum is participating in the student showcase.

Arizona Museum of Natural History – Tom Wilson

- The three new dinosaurs for Dinosaur Mountain are in route from China and are expected in Los Angeles on February 11. The Arizona Museum of Natural History Foundation raised the money for the three new animatronic dinosaurs, and is providing funds for refurbishment of the mountain, which is currently underway. Vegetation appropriate to the time periods, new lighting, sound and other affects will be added to the Mountain. The Museum hopes to unveil these new additions sometime in March.
- The Arizona Museum of Natural History Guild and the Arizona Museum of Natural History Foundation have agreed to merge, the result of which will provide more dynamic, streamlined operations for the Museum.
- A patron who saw the "Cultures of the Americas" exhibition contacted the Museum to let them know that a collector in Chicago wanted to donate objects to a Museum. The collector, who passed away, left instructions in his will to leave his collection with a Museum. The Art Institute in Chicago received some of them and the Arizona Museum of Natural History will receive 22 objects from the collection. Museum staff will travel to Chicago to pack up and bring back the objects, which will be a large savings to the Museum.
- Arizona Museum of Natural History received a grant for \$90,000 over a three year period. The first portion of the grant is being used to expand the parking lot at Mesa Grande. The Museum is submitting additional grant applications: two for preservation purposes and two for programming purposes at Mesa Grande.
- National Geographic Society awarded the Arizona Museum of Natural History and ASU a grant to date the canals at the Riverview and Riverview Park excavations to be carried out in advance of the commercial and municipal developments in those areas. The grant will fund a new dating system that will allow direct dating of canal deposits.

Mesa Arts Center/Mesa Contemporary Arts – Rob Schultz via a printed report

Rob Schultz was in New York City attending the winter Board meeting for the Americans for the Arts' Arts Education Council. He submitted the following report that Jean Kaminski distributed to the Board members present.

- Artspace: The Artspace team, including their President and CEO Kelley Lindquist, were in Mesa last week to give a presentation to the Mayor and City Council, meet with key City stakeholders, tour Mesa Arts Center and the downtown area, and discuss fundraising strategies. They also conducted two public workshop meetings to get ideas from local artists and community members for the actual design of the facility to be located at 155 S. Hibbert Street.
- Mesa Arts Festival: The Mesa Arts Festival was presented on December 13 and 14 and drew a larger crowd than last year, with estimated attendance of 9,000 people. 46 artists displayed and sold their work, and the Artist Cooperative Gallery had a strong sales weekend as well, doing over \$3,000 in sales on Saturday, December 13 alone.
- Creative Aging: On March 13, the Mesa Arts Center will co-host a gathering of Valley and Arizona creative aging professionals and programmers, together with the Arizona Commission on the Arts. The day-long "summit meeting" will be an opportunity for teaching artists and arts administrators to talk about creative aging programming and share best practices in the field. Americans for the Arts, the national organization representing 5,000 local arts agencies, is also planning to ramp up their support for the creative aging movement nationally – Mr. Schultz has been asked to assist with this effort on behalf of Mesa.

Director's Report – Cindy Ornstein via a printed report

Cindy Ornstein had another mandatory Board meeting to attend and submitted the following report that Jean Kaminski distributed to the Board members present.

- Things at Mesa Arts Center are going well. Participation in all areas is good and planning is very active for the coming season.
- Many of our new initiatives are moving along nicely. A prototype of the new interactive artwork for the North Plaza by Daily Tours les Jours is scheduled to be tested with the public at spark! Mesa's Festival of Creativity. spark itself is in its final planning stages; this year's theme is Earth, Water, Air and Fire. There will be many commissioned pieces and interactives; quite a few involving technology. Four hands-on activities will be available for people of all ages to participate in artmaking.
- The 50% design for the shade sculpture by Cecil Balmond will be delivered soon and will be shared with the Board at the next meeting.
- Planning is underway for the 10th Anniversary of Mesa Arts Center, which will kick off in September and run through the season. Staff and stakeholder input sessions have been held; we will then match existing and new special programs and activities to fulfill the goals for the event.
- The new exhibitions at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum are installed or about to be installed, including the Annual Contemporary Craft exhibition. An opening reception for the new exhibitions will be held on Friday, February 13.

Report on Conferences and/or meetings/Performances Attended: Board Members – Information only

Alyssa Yingling reported that she attended Phoenix Symphony's performance of Handel's Messiah. She said it was sad to see so many empty seats because the performance was wonderful.

Merlin Ellis and Karina Wilhelm attended the Phoenix Chorale's performance right before the holiday; it was amazing.

Melissa Sue Johnson attended one of the Daily Tours les Jours brainstorming meetings for the interactive component on the upcoming north plaza project, and her class participated in the recycling project for the i.d.e.a. Museum. Sunnee O'Rork said she would send the Board a list of the schools who participated.

Karina Wilhelm used her Pogo Pass to take her children to the i.d.e.a. Museum for the first time since the rebranding. They had a great time doing the projects and had a lot of fun in ArtVille as well.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti presented an early Valentine box of See's candy to the managers for their staff members.

Nancy Aposhian visited the i.d.e.a. Museum with her son and had a lot of fun with the interactive activities. They also visited the MIM in Phoenix.

David Dean went to the Botanical luminary over the holidays. He also visited the Arizona Science Museum and witnessed the feeding of beetles – very interesting – and his family enjoyed the hands-on activities. Along with his car club, he visited the Dwarf Car Museum in Maricopa. Ernie Adams, originator of the dwarf car, has made a name for himself building Dwarf Race Cars and scaled down replicas of classic cars called Dwarf Car Cruisers. These handmade works of art take five years to build and actually run.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr., reported that he attended one of the holiday concerts and congratulated the staff for so professionally handling a situation where a patron was holding half an aisle of seats. They brought friends with them and all enjoyed the concert.

Dilworth Brinton, Jr., asked Tom Wilson if he had seen the new Museum of the West that recently opened in Scottsdale. Dr. Wilson said he attended the opening. The Museum is 43,000 square feet with 13 galleries featuring mostly art with some western objects, such as badges, saddles, etc., and an exhibition on Lewis and Clark. Admission is \$13 for adults. The Museum has been a long time in the making and, he added, the architecture is really nice.

Sunnee O'Rork reported that she visited the M. C. Escher exhibition in Manchester, NH.

Jean Kaminski announced that at the next Board meeting, Cindy Ornstein will conduct a Strategic Planning exercise.

Dr. Robbi D. Venditti, Chair, asked about an announcement sent to Board members that week regarding funding for the Arizona Commission for the Arts. Tom Wilson replied that the main function of the Arizona Citizens for the Arts is to

advocate for the arts in Arizona and particularly for the Arizona Commission for the Arts. This year, the Governor's budget does not contain \$1M that was previous there to support the Arizona Commission for the Arts. A crippling cut, as that makes up approximately 40% of the Arts Commission's budget. As a Board member for the Arizona Citizens for the Arts, he encouraged the Museum and Cultural Advisory Board to attend the Arts Congress on February 3 and meet with their legislators to ask them to restore that \$1M to the Arizona Commission for the Arts' budget. If Board members are unable to attend the Arts Congress, he asked that they write to their legislators.

The Arizona Museum of Natural History does not receive grants from the Arizona Commission on the Arts, but the i.d.e.a. Museum and Mesa Arts Center does. Sunnee O'Rork said that when she began, the Museum received a grant from the Arizona Commission for the Arts in the amount of \$40,000, but it has been decreasing rapidly every year since. The lowest amount they received was \$9,000 two years ago. The money the Museum receives goes directly toward paying front-line staff and is critical to the Museum. They have had to use some volunteers to fill the gap. She too encouraged the Board to either attend Arts Congress or write their legislators.

David Dean said that he has undergraduate history students who might be interested in interning/volunteering at the Museums and could put the Museums in touch with the students.

The next scheduled meeting date is May 28, 2015.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cindy Ornstein".

Cindy Ornstein, Director
Arts and Culture Department